MARVEL COMICS
X-MEN 2099
MIDNIGHT SUN
HEARD YOU MISSED ME...
WELL, I'M BACK!
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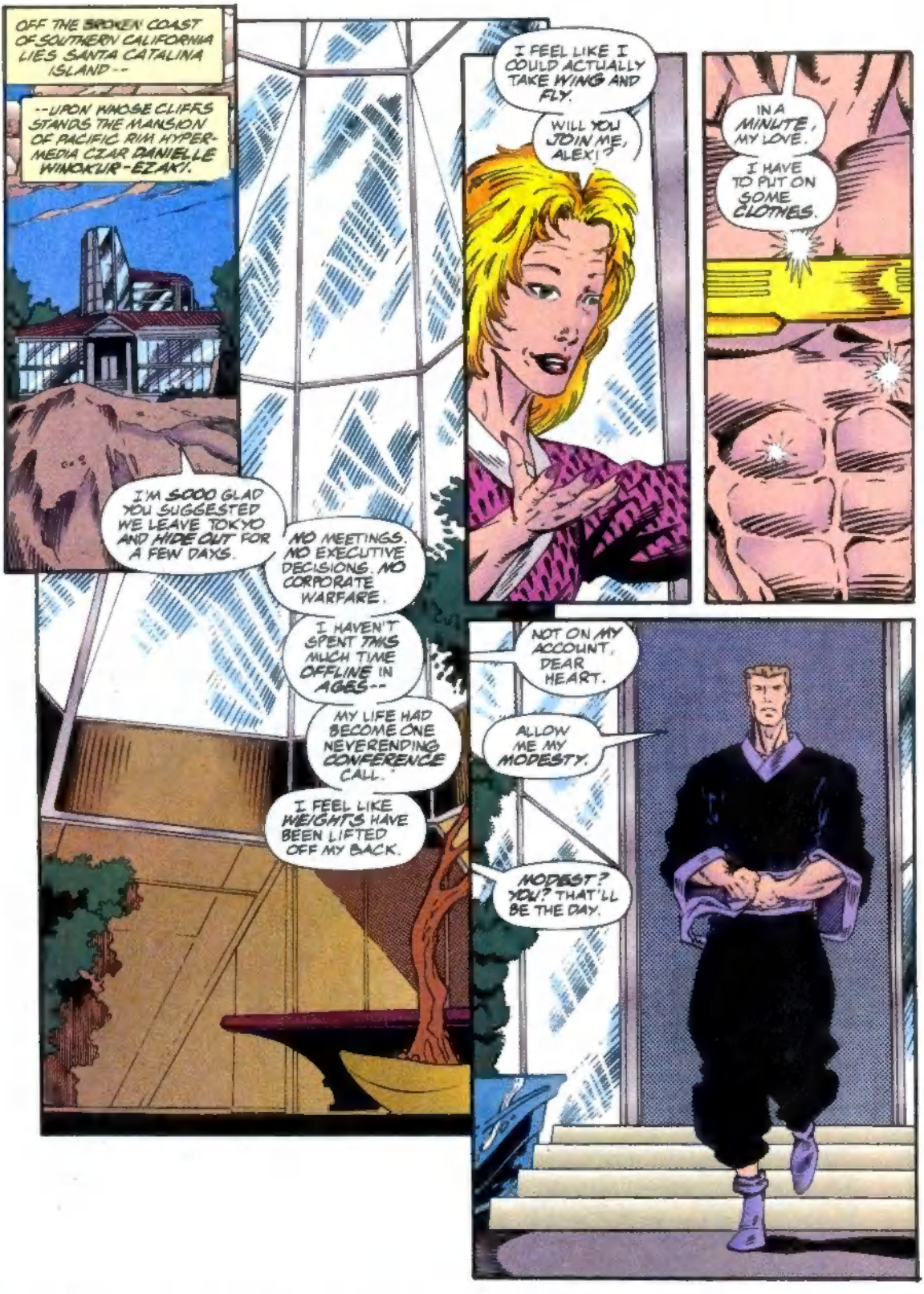
OFF THE SPOKEN COAST OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LIES SANTA CATALINA ISLAND--
--UPON WHOSE CLIFFS STANDS THE MANSION OF PACIFIC RIM HYPER-MEDIA CZAR DANIELLE WINOKUR-EZAKI.
I'M SOOO GLAD YOU SUGGESTED WE LEAVE TOKYO AND HIDE OUT FOR A FEW DAYS.
NO MEETINGS. NO EXECUTIVE DECISIONS. NO CORPORATE WARFARE.
I HAVEN'T SPENT THIS MUCH TIME OFFLINE IN AGES--
MY LIFE HAD BECOME ONE NEVERENDING CONFERENCE CALL.
I FEEL LIKE WEIGHTS HAVE BEEN LIFTED OFF MY BACK.
I FEEL LIKE I COULD ACTUALLY TAKE WING AND FLY.
WILL YOU JOIN ME, ALEX!?
IN A MINUTE, MY LOVE.
I HAVE TO PUT ON SOME CLOTHES.
NOT ON MY ACCOUNT, DEAR HEART.
ALLOW ME MY MODESTY.
MODEST? YOU? THAT'LL BE THE DAY.

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Stan Lee presents:
ALL THAT GLITTERS
ARE YOU SAYING I'M VAIN?
AN UNDERSTATEMENT... ALTHOUGH NOT WITHOUT REASON.
WHEN I ADDED THE ZERO-GRAVITY CHAMBER TO MY ATRIUM, I THOUGHT I'D BE ITS ONLY ANGEL.
--BUT IN THIS MORNING LIGHT, YOU, MY DEAR ALEX!--
--ARE POSITIVELY ETHEREAL.
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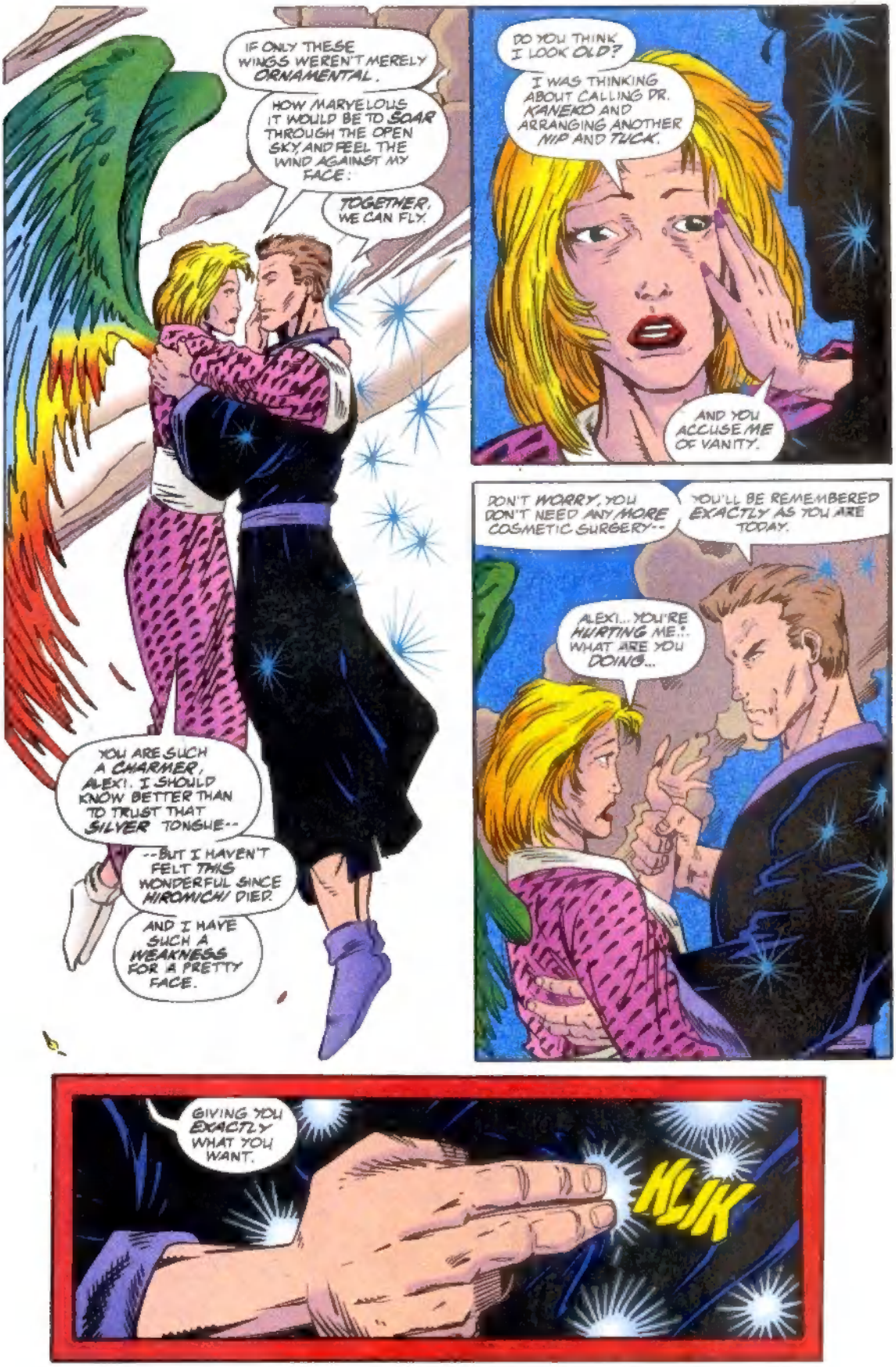
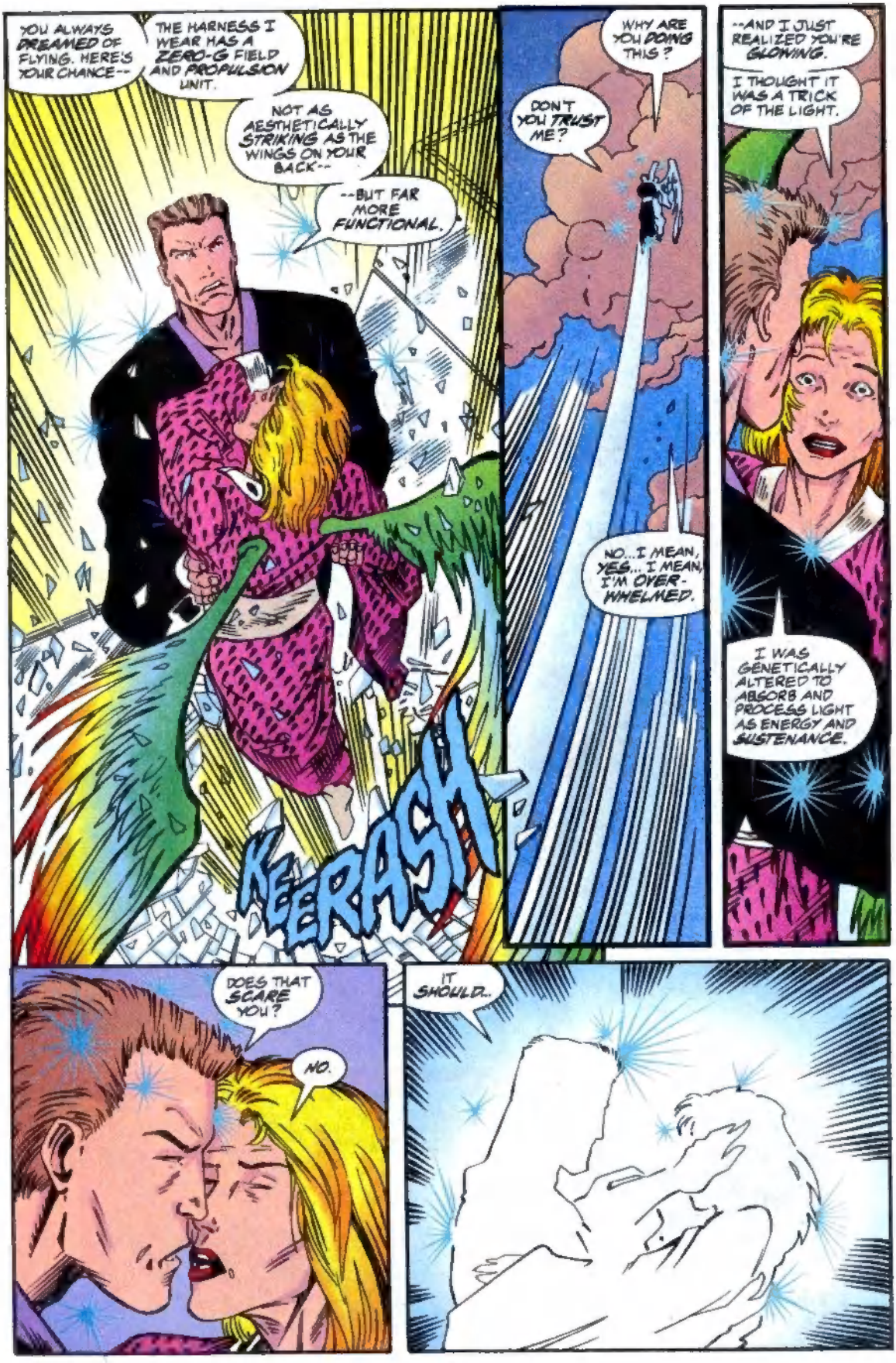
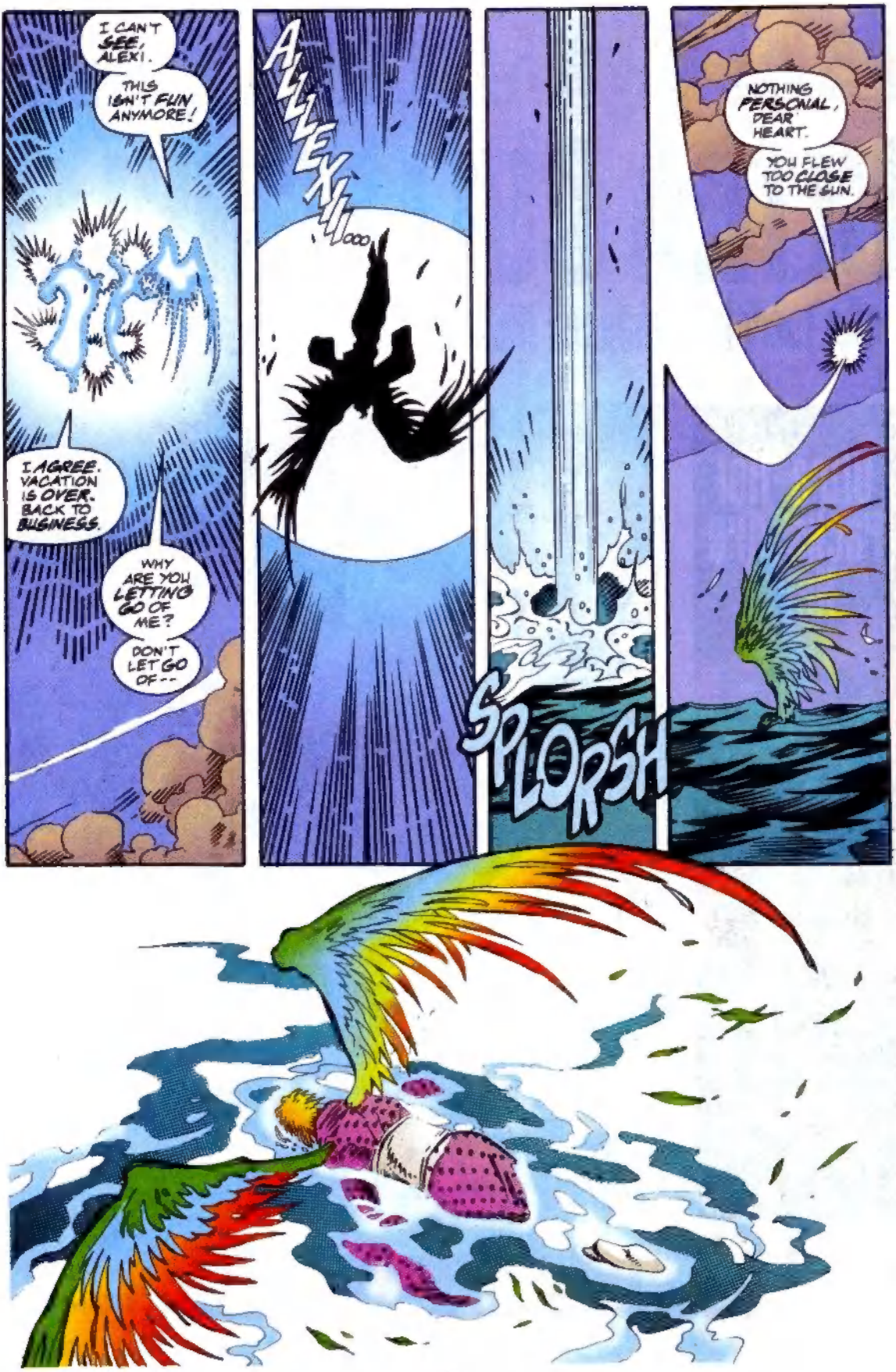

IF ONLY THESE WINGS WEREN'T MERELY ORNAMENTAL.
HOW MARVELOUS IT WOULD BE TO SOAR THROUGH THE OPEN SKY AND FEEL THE WIND AGAINST MY FACE.
TOGETHER, WE CAN FLY.
YOU ARE SUCH A CHARMER, ALEX!. I SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO TRUST THAT SILVER TONGUE--
--BUT I HAVEN'T FELT THIS WONDERFUL SINCE HIROMICHI DIED.
AND I HAVE SUCH A WEAKNESS FOR A PRETTY FACE.
DO YOU THINK I LOOK OLD?
I WAS THINKING ABOUT CALLING DR. KANEKO AND ARRANGING ANOTHER NIP AND TUCK.
AND YOU ACCUSE ME OF VANITY.
DON'T WORRY, YOU DON'T NEED ANY MORE COSMETIC SURGERY--
YOU'LL BE REMEMBERED EXACTLY AS YOU ARE TODAY.
ALEX!... YOU'RE HURTING ME! WHAT ARE YOU DOING...
GIVING YOU EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT.
KLIK

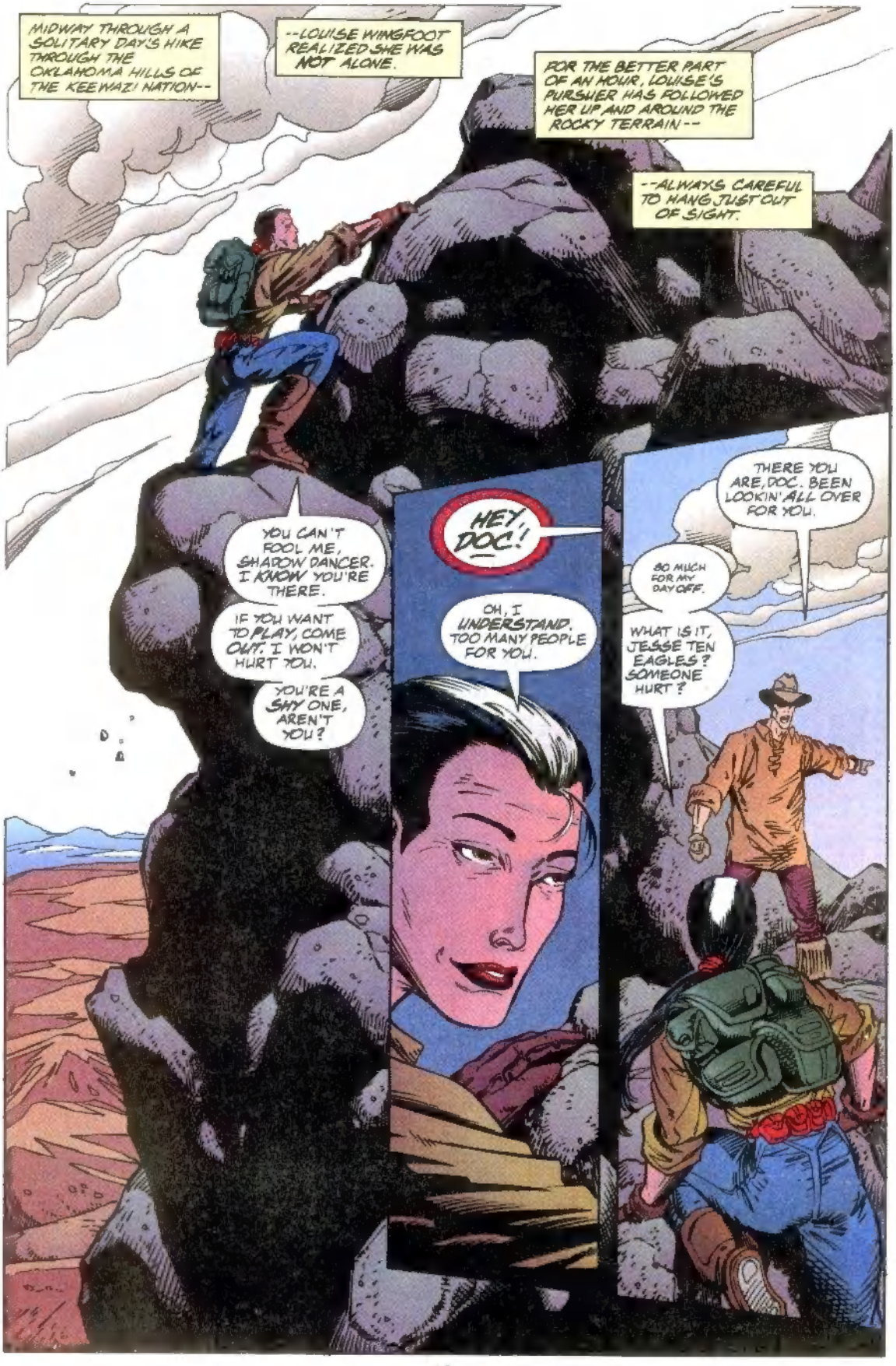

YOU ALWAYS DREAMED OF FLYING. HERE'S YOUR CHANCE--
THE HARNESS I WEAR HAS A ZERO-G FIELD AND PROPULSION UNIT.
NOT AS AESTHETICALLY STRIKING AS THE WINGS ON YOUR BACK--
--BUT FAR MORE FUNCTIONAL.
KEERASH
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
DON'T YOU TRUST ME?
NO...I MEAN, YES... I MEAN, I'M OVER-WHELMED.
--AND I JUST REALIZED YOU'RE GLOWING.
I THOUGHT IT WAS A TRICK OF THE LIGHT.
I WAS GENETICALLY ALTERED TO ABSORB AND PROCESS LIGHT AS ENERGY AND SUSTENANCE.
DOES THAT SCARE YOU?
NO.
IT SHOULD..


I CAN'T SEE, ALEX!.
THIS ISN'T FUN ANYMORE!
I AGREE. VACATION IS OVER. BACK TO BUSINESS.
WHY ARE YOU LETTING GO OF ME?
DON'T LET GO OF--
ALEXI
SPLORSH
NOTHING PERSONAL, DEAR HEART.
YOU FLEW TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN.

IN THE SANGRE DE CRISTO MOUNTAINS, ANGRY VOICES FILL THE RANCH HOUSE OF A COMATOSE MADMAN--
--WHICH NOW SERVES AS WAY STATION TO THE DWINDLING NUMBER OF MUTANTS WHO CALL THEMSELVES X-MEN.
ARE YOU ABSOLUTELY OUT OF YOUR SKULL, FITZGERALD?
YOU BROUGHT LA LUNATICA HERE?
SHE'S WITH ME, HENRI. DEAL WITH IT.
THAT WITCH TRIED TO SET US UP AS HUMAN VIEWMASTERS FOR THE CONTROLLER'S TWISTED CLIENTELE!
NOW YOU WALK IN HERE HOLDING HANDS LIKE THIS IS DATE NIGHT!
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE PSYCHOTIC OR JUST A MORON!
I THINK YOU BETTER EXPLAIN YOURSELF, TIMOTHY.
I TOLD YOU THIS IS A MISTAKE.

YOU BET IT IS, SISTER.
MEN!/--
BACK OFF, SHAKTI, I OWE THIS AMAZON.
SLOW DOWN, SPEEDY, BEFORE I HAVE TO KNOCK YOU DOWN.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO PROTECT ME, FITZ.
I'VE HANDLED MEANSTREAK BEFORE.
WHOOSH
TIM, GET OUT OF MY WAY...
NO. YOU'RE BEHAVING IRRATIONALLY.
IRRATIONALLY? I'M NOT THE ONE WITH THE HALLOWEEN MASK.
LISTEN TO ME. WE'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT THAN LUNA.
XI'AN'S JOINED THE THEATRE OF PAIN.
WHAT? YOU MEAN HE NOT ONLY ABANDONED THE X-MEN, BUT SIGNED UP WITH THAT SADISTIC STAR CHAMBER?
IT'S TO BE EXPECTED. AFTER XI'AN'S ENCOUNTER WITH ZHAO, HIS DARK SIDE RESURFACED.
HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?

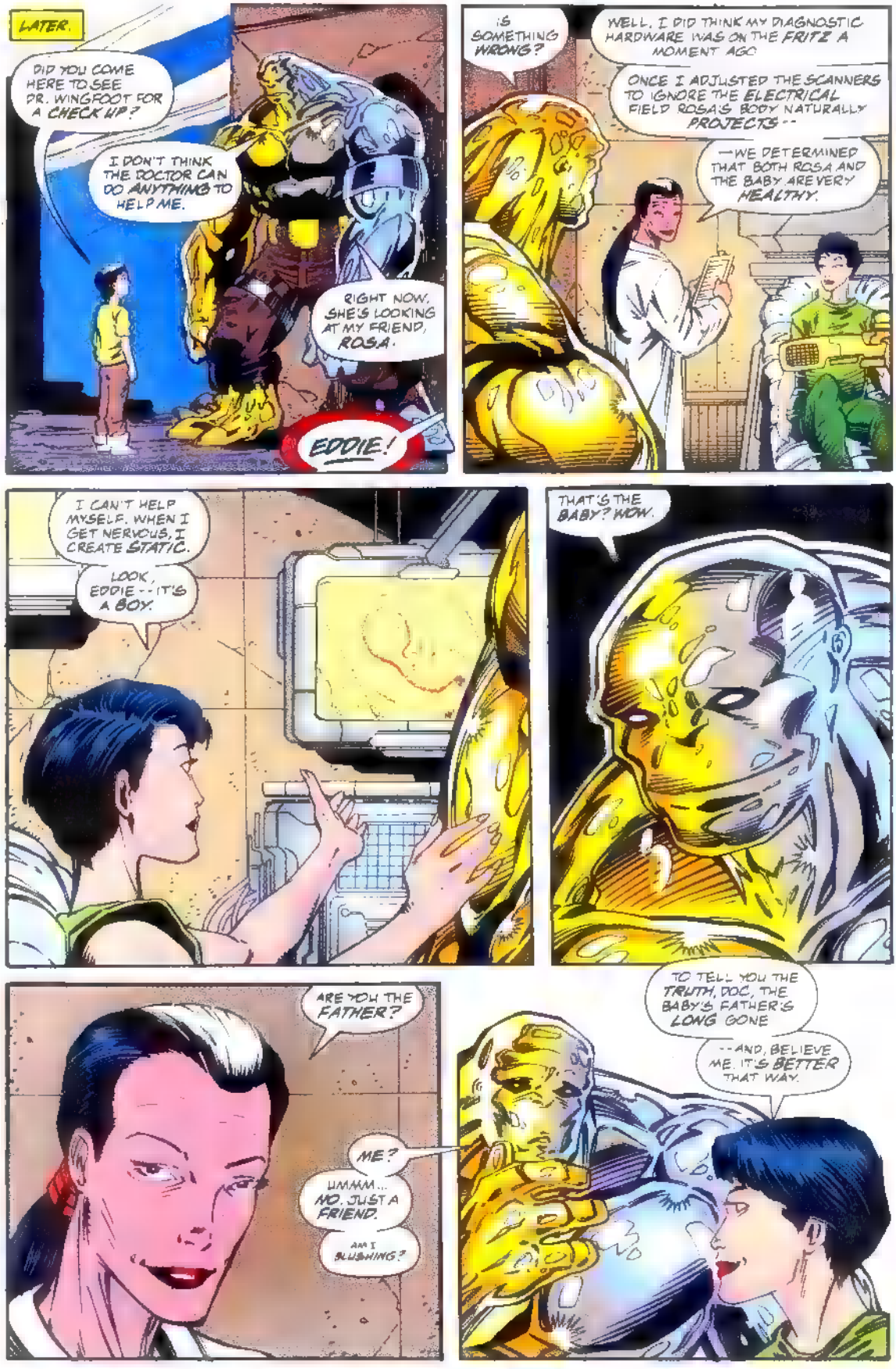
THE SHORT VERSION GOES LIKE THIS--
LOOKING FOR A MYSTERY MAN CALLED THE DRIVER, XI'AN AND I RAN INTO LUNA IN TEXAS.
TURNS OUT SHE'S ON THE RUN FROM THE THEATRE'S BIG DADDY, A WHITE-HOT THREAT NAMED BRIMSTONE LOVE.
WHEN WE FINALLY LOCATED THE DRIVER, LOVE CRASHES THE PARTY, AND INSTEAD OF [illegible] LUNA--
--HE OFFERS XI'AN THE GOLD KEY MEMBERSHIP TO THE THEATRE.
AND XI'AN SAYS YES--LEAVING US WITH NOTHING!
KRASH
THAT WAS A POINTLESS DISPLAY, HENRI.
SMASHING LAB EQUIPMENT WON'T BRING XI'AN BACK TO US.
OKAY, YOU'RE THE GENIUS, SHAKTI. WHAT DO WE DO WITHOUT HIM?
WE CAN'T STAY HERE FOREVER.
TELL YOU WHAT WE'RE GONNA DO, HENRI--
WE'RE GONNA PICK UP WHERE XI'AN LEFT OFF--AND REBUILD THE X-MEN--
--AND THEN WE'RE GOING TO BRING THE CURTAIN DOWN ON THE THEATRE OF PAIN.


MIDWAY THROUGH A SOLITARY DAY'S HIKE THROUGH THE OKLAHOMA HILLS OF THE KEEWAZI NATION--
--LOUISE WINGFOOT REALIZED SHE WAS NOT ALONE.
FOR THE BETTER PART OF AN HOUR, LOUISE'S PURSUER HAS FOLLOWED HER UP AND AROUND THE ROCKY TERRAIN--
--ALWAYS CAREFUL TO HANG JUST OUT OF SIGHT.
YOU CAN'T FOOL ME, SHADOW DANCER. I KNOW YOU'RE THERE.
IF YOU WANT TO PLAY, COME OUT. I WON'T HURT YOU.
YOU'RE A SHY ONE, AREN'T YOU?
HEY, DOC!
OH, I UNDERSTAND. TOO MANY PEOPLE FOR YOU.
THERE YOU ARE, DOC. BEEN LOOKIN' ALL OVER FOR YOU.
SO MUCH FOR MY DAY OFF.
WHAT IS IT, JESSE TEN EAGLES? SOMEONE HURT?

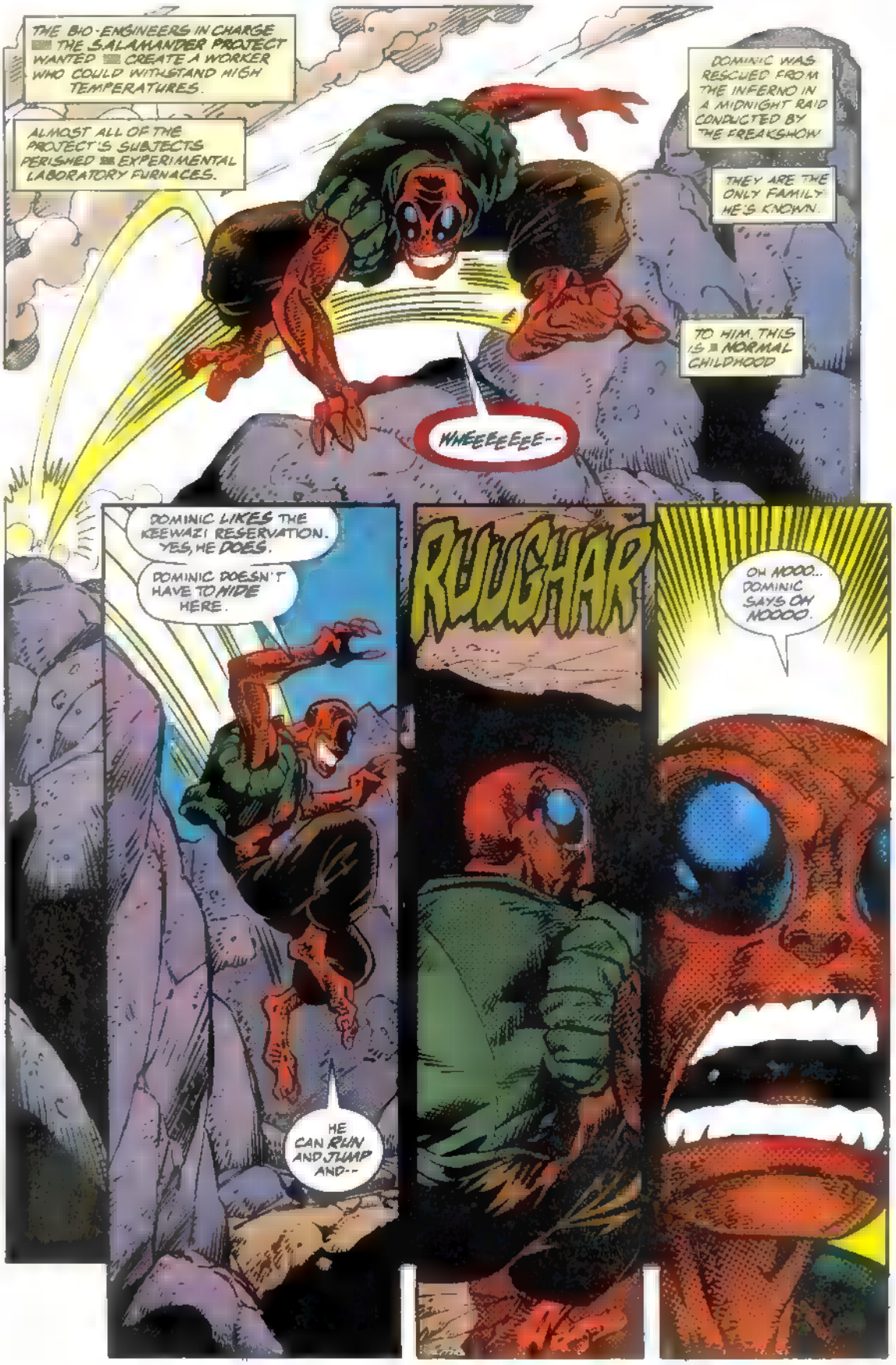
NOPE. WE GOT TROUBLE IN TOWN.
SOUTHER'S PEOPLE?
NO. NONE OF THESE FOLK LOOK LIKE THE REVIVAL TENT CROWD.
SO WHY DO YOU NEED ME? CAN'T SMITH OR GREYHAWK HANDLE THIS?
YOU GOTTA SEE THESE PEOPLE, DOC.
[redacted], YOU'RE A COUNCIL MEM[redacted]. THAT MEANS YOU'RE THE AUTHORITY FIGURE NOW.
I KEEP FORGETTING.
THEY CAME IN ACROSS SOUTH FORK ROAD ABOUT AN HOUR [redacted].
I NEVER SEEN NOTHING LIKE THEM BEFORE. THEY LOOK LIKE SOME KIND OF... I DUNNO...
FREAKSHOW.
WELL, I WAS TRYIN' TO FIND A MORE POLITE WAY OF PUTTIN' IT.

NO, THEY CALL THEMSELVES THE FREAKSHOW.
THEY'RE A GROUP OF NOMADS COMPRISED OF BIOSHOP REFUGEES AND DISCARDS--
--MOTHERED BY A CRAZY OLD WOMAN NAMED HURRICANE.
YOU SAID WE'D BE SAFE HERE, MAMA...

...BUT IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE WE'RE TOO WELCOME. DOES IT?
PUT DOWN THOSE RIFLES. THEY WOULDN'T DO YOU MUCH GOOD AGAINST THIS BUNCH ANYWAY
ANY OF YOU TRY TALKING TO THEM?
YOU LOCO, LOUISE? THOSE ARE DEGENS.
OKAY. ONCE AGAIN, THE DIRTY WORK FALLS TO ME.
YOU MUST BE MAMA HURRICANE, THE CRAZY DESERT FIGHTER?
DOCTOR. WINGFOOT, I PRESUME.
GOOD TO SEE YOU, TISHA.
LONG TIME, LOU
QUITE AN ENTOURAGE YOU GOT WITH YOU.
YOU KNOW ME AND MY STRAIS--
BREAKDOWN.
PSYCLONE.
TANTRUM.
CONTAGION.
DOMINIC.
ROSALINDA.
AND OUR NEWEST ADDITION, EDDIE.
HI! HI!
WE'VE BEEN ON THE ROAD A LONG TIME. WE NEED A PLACE TO STAY. SUPPLIES. THE USUAL.
IF IT CAUSES TROUBLE FOR YOU, WE'LL MOVE ON.
DON'T BE SILLY, TISHA. STAY AS LONG AS YOU NEED.
YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN THE KEEWAZI NATION.


LATER.
DID YOU COME HERE TO SEE DR. WINGFOOT FOR A CHECK UP?
I DON'T THINK THE DOCTOR CAN DO ANYTHING TO HELP ME.
RIGHT NOW, SHE'S LOOKING AT MY FRIEND, ROSA.
EDDIE!
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
WELL, I DID THINK MY DIAGNOSTIC HARDWARE WAS ON THE FRITZ A MOMENT AGO
ONCE I ADJUSTED THE SCANNERS TO IGNORE THE ELECTRICAL FIELD ROSA'S BODY NATURALLY PROJECTS--
--WE DETERMINED THAT BOTH ROSA AND THE BABY ARE VERY HEALTHY.
I CAN'T HELP MYSELF. WHEN I GET NERVOUS, I CREATE STATIC.
LOOK, EDDIE--IT'S A BOY.
THAT'S THE BABY? WOW.
ARE YOU THE FATHER?
ME?
UMMM... NO. JUST A FRIEND.
AM I BLUSHING?
TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, DOC, THE BABY'S FATHER'S LONG GONE
--AND, BELIEVE ME, IT'S BETTER THAT WAY.

THE CENTURY CITY MULTIPLEX SPRAWLS OVER LOS ANGELES' WEST SIDE--
--WHERE MEDIACORPS BATTLE FOR THE SHORT ATTENTION SPAN OF AN ENTERTAINMENT-SATURATED AUDIENCE.
I'VE COMPLETED THE WINOKUR-EZAKI CONTRACT.
YES, [redacted]. THEY DRAGGED THE BODY OUT OF SANTA MONICA BAY THIS MORNING.
I BET THAT WITCH IS SORRY SHE LEVERAGED ME OUT OF THE CELESTIALCOM BUYOUT NOW.
NOBODY UNDERMINES HEINRICH GREENSTREET. I AM A HOUSEHOLD NAME [redacted] HYPER-MEDIA.
I'VE [redacted] AND BROKEN TOO MANY CAREERS IN THIS TOWN TO COUNT.
ALEX! JAEGER. COME IN. COME IN. OR SHOULD I CALL YOU GLITTER-SPIKE?
TOO MANY STAGENAMES IN THIS TOWN TO KEEP TRACK OF THEM ALL.
CAN MY SECRETARY [redacted] YOU SOMETHING? WE HAVE THE LATEST IN DESIGNER WATER BLENDS.
I DIDN'T COME HERE FOR A DRINK, GREENSTREET.
LISTEN, PLUGHEAD, I AM NOT ONE OF YOUR SYCOPHANTIC WANNABES DESPERATE [redacted] YOU TO GREENLIGHT THEM TO STARDOM
IF YOU DON'T COME THROUGH FOR ME, I WILL DISCONNECT YOU PERMANENTLY.
PLEASE, MR. JAEGER. NO NEED TO GET VIOLENT.
UNDERSTAND, I HAD TO CALL IN SOME FAVORS ON THIS ONE.
FRINGERS WITHOUT BARCODE IMPLANTS ARE NOTORIOUSLY DIFFICULT TO TRACK.
THE GIRL'S IN OKLAHOMA. THE SPECS ARE ON THIS DISC.
NOW GET OUT OF MY OFFICE. I HAVE A MEETING AT ELEVEN WITH SOMEONE REALLY IMPORTANT.


THE BIO-ENGINEERS IN CHARGE OF THE SALAMANDER PROJECT WANTED TO CREATE A WORKER WHO COULD WITHSTAND HIGH TEMPERATURES.
ALMOST ALL OF THE PROJECT'S SUBJECTS PERISHED IN EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORY FURNACES.
DOMINIC WAS RESCUED FROM THE INFERNO IN A MIDNIGHT RAID CONDUCTED BY THE FREAKSHOW
THEY ARE THE ONLY FAMILY HE'S KNOWN.
TO HIM, THIS IS A NORMAL CHILDHOOD
WHEEEEEEE--
DOMINIC LIKES THE KEEWAZI RESERVATION. YES, HE DOES.
DOMINIC DOESN'T HAVE TO HIDE HERE.
HE CAN RUN AND JUMP AND--
RUUGHAR
OH NOOO... DOMINIC SAYS OH NOOOO.

--THE OTHERS WILL PROBABLY KEEP TO THEMSELVES WHILE WE'RE HERE. MY CREW IS NOT TOO SOCIAL.
EXCEPT FOR DOMINIC.
HE'S ONLY TEN YEARS OLD. HE'S CURIOUS ABOUT EVERYTHING.
MAMA! MAMA! IT'S AFTER DOMINIC! HELP!
MAMA! IT WAS BIG AND FURRY AND HAD CLAWS AND GROWLED AT DOMINIC! RRRUGHARR! LIKE THAT!
SOUNDS LIKE DOMINIC RAN INTO THE SHADOW DANCER.
SLOW DOWN, DOMINIC. YOU'RE NOT MAKING SENSE. WHAT GROWLED AT YOU?
SHADOW DANCER?
KEEWAZI LEGEND SAYS THE SHADOW DANCER LIVES IN THE HILLS AND PLAYS IN THE LONG SHADOWS OF TWILIGHT.
THEY SAY HE RUNS WITH THE WOLVES IN SUMMER AND SLEEPS WITH THE BEARS IN WINTER.
DON'T WORRY, HE'S MOSTLY HARMLESS.
ARE YOU SAYING THIS CREATURE IS REAL?
I FIND THAT HARD TO BELIEVE, LOU.
DOMINIC SAW HIM
I KNOW YOU DID, DOMINIC. I HAVE TOO.
NEVER FOR LONG, HE MOVES TOO FAST-- BUT LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW HE'S NOT A MYTH.
MY GRANDMOTHER USED TO SAY HE WAS THE TRIBE'S GUARDIAN SPIRIT, AND ONLY APPEARED WHEN THERE WAS TROUBLE IN THE WIND...

I'VE FOUND YOU, ROSA NAVARRO!
THAT LIGHT!
SHOCK! MAMA, WE'RE IN TROUBLE!
I KNOW, DARLIN'!
THOUGHT YOU COULD RUN AWAY WITH THIS BIOSHOP TRASH AND NEVER SEE ME AGAIN, DIDN'T YOU?
YOU SHOULD KNOW, BABY, YOUR FREAKSHOW CAN'T PROTECT YOU FROM GLITTERSPIKE.
I'VE COME FOR WHAT'S MINE, ROSA. I'LL LET NO ONE STAND IN MY WAY.

ALEX!, YOU ARE ONE ROYAL PAIN IN THE BUTT.
ONE OF YOURS?
NAH, ROSA'S OLD SQUEEZE. FREELANCE THUG. PYROTECHNIC AUGMENTATION. HUGE EGO. NO HEART.
POND SCUM, BUT DANGEROUS POND SCUM.
CHUNDT CHUNDT
ROSA, TELL THE OLD WOMAN SHE'S GOING TO GET HURT IF SHE DOESN'T STAY OUT OF OUR BUSINESS.
DOMINIC, STAY WITH--
NO...GO AWAY...GO AWAY!
ROSA DOESN'T WANT YOU [redacted]. DOMINIC DOESN'T WANT YOU HERE.
GO HOME. GO HOME.
AND IF I DON'T, WHAT WILL YOU DO, FROG BOY. BURN ME?
OUT OF MY WAY, DISCARD!
THUNK
ARRGH!

YOU--YOU--! DOMINIC'S JUST A KID.
IF YOU'VE HURT HIM, I'LL--
TAKE THAT TONE WITH ME, GIRL, AND YOU'LL REGRET IT.
DONT EVEN THINK ABOUT IT, GLITTERSPIKE.
WHO...
MY FRIENDS CALL ME EDDIE.
YOU CAN CALL ME METALHEAD.
YOU'RE MAKING A MIS-- UGHHH.
WHUNK
EDDIE, BE CAREFUL. HE'S A HIRED KILLER.

AND YOU WERE INVOLVED WITH THIS CREEP?
I COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT SOMEONE THAT BEAUTIFUL OUTSIDE WAS SO CORRUPT INSIDE--
BY THE TIME I REALIZED LOVE'S NOT SUPPOSED TO LEAVE YOU BLACK AND BLUE, I FOUND OUT I WAS PREG--
EDDIE, LOOK OUT!
YOU BEAT HER?
THE MORE I KNOW YOU, THE MORE I WANT TO HURT YOU, SPIKE!
YOU'RE NEW TO THE OLD WOMAN'S MENAGERIE, SO LET ME CLUE YOU IN.
NOT EVEN ROSA'S BROTHER BREAKDOWN COULD BEST ME, SO WHAT CHANCE DO YOU HAVE, MONSTER?
DESPITE YOUR METALLIC SKIN--
YOUR EYES ARE STILL SENSITIVE TO THE LIGHT AT MY COMMAND.
AHHHH, MY EYES--!!!

CAN'T SEE!
ROSA, RUN!
YOUR OBVIOUS AFFECTION FOR ROSA IS LAUGHABLE, MONSTER.
THERE IS NO ONE MORE VULNERABLE THAN A FOOL IN LOVE.
ONCE I GET MY HANDS ON YOU--
I HAVE NO DOUBT YOU COULD CRUSH ME IF YOU COULD--
--BUT BEFORE I LET THAT HAPPEN, I WANT TO SHOW YOU ANOTHER TRICK OF MINE.
BY CONCENTRATING, I CAN SHAPE THE ENERGY I CONTROL INTO A WEAPON OF SOLID LIGHT.
KRANNG
DENSE ENOUGH TO BRING YOU TO YOUR KNEES!
URRNGF!

THWOMP
DON'T TOUCH HIM, ROSA--HIS SKIN'S CONDUCTING GLITTERSPIKE'S ENERGY LIKE A LIVE WIRE.
EDDIE!
ALEX!, I'M GONNA RIP YOU APART.
BABY, YOU GOT ME ALL WRONG.
I DIDN'T COME HERE TO FIGHT.
YOU'RE CARRYING MY CHILD.
FROM NOW ON, I'M TAKING CARE OF YOU AND THE BABY.
NEXT:
SHOWDOWN IN SHADOW